Chapter 6

John G. Lake "A Man of Healing" (excerpt)

"A man of healing"

I said to them [the scientists]: "Honourable gentlemen, I would like to show you something else. Go to your hospital and get a man who is suffering from osteomyelitis. Attach your instruments to his leg. You can attach them on both sides. Leave enough space so that I can put my hand on his leg." When the instruments were attached, I put my hand on the man's shin and prayed like Mother Etter: no strange prayer, I cried out to God from my heart. I said, "God, destroy this diabolical disease by your power. Work in him with your spirit; let your spirit live in him." Then I asked: "Sirs, what is happening?" They replied: "Every cell reacts."

If ever there was a man who lived in the revelation of what it means for God to dwell in man, it was John G. Lake. A man with a purpose, a vision, full of strength and character, whose sole aim in life was to impart the fullness of God to every man. He often said that the secret of heavenly power was not to do something, but to be something. He was convinced that Spirit-filled Christians should enjoy the same ministry that Jesus exercised when he lived on earth and that they could only experience this reality if they saw themselves through the eyes of God.

The shadow of death John Graham Lake's life and ministry were based on this spiritual realisation. He was born on 18 March 1870 in Ontario, Canada. As one of sixteen children, he moved with his family to Sault Sainte Marie (Michigan) as a young boy. When Lake was sixteen years old, he heard the gospel for the first time at a Salvation Army event and shortly afterwards he gave his life to the Lord. Although he had led a morally upright life, his heart was not at rest until he asked the Lord to save him. Lake later wrote about this experience: "I surrendered myself to God. The light of heaven illuminated my soul and I rose from my knees as a son of God - and I knew it."

Lake's parents were strong, energetic personalities who enjoyed excellent health. The rest of the family, however, was tainted with a spirit of sickness and death, and eight children - four brothers and four sisters - died. "For 32 years one of my family was constantly ill," Lake wrote. "During that long period, not a day went by without some illness casting its shadow over us." When he thought back to his childhood, "illnesses, doctors, nurses, clinics, hearses, funerals, cemeteries and gravestones, a grieving family, a heartbroken mother and a deeply grieved father desperately trying to forget the suffering of the past in order to be there for his still-living family who desperately needed his love and care" came involuntarily to his mind.

Wrong "science" - right attitude as a teenager, Lake was passionately interested in science and physics. He was also fond of chemistry and loved experimenting with scientific instruments. He also took part

in a medical seminar, but later did not venture any further into this field. Lake was meticulous in both his scientific and spiritual studies. He researched the Bible tirelessly, not only seeking to understand it, but also to test its applicability in everyday life. And so it was that Lake did everything in the power of the resurrection. In 1890, when Lake was twenty years old, a Christian farmer explained to him the meaning of sanctification. This revelation pierced his heart and through it God accomplished His crowning work in Lake's life. Commenting on this newfound realisation, Lake said: "I will never stop praising God for revealing to me the depth ... of power hidden in the blood of Jesus. A marvellous anointing of the Holy Spirit has been upon my life."

A year later, in 1891, Lake moved to Chicago, where he was accepted into the Methodist School of Ministry. In October of the same year, he was offered the pastorate of a congregation in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, but declined. He decided instead to leave the Methodist school and move to Harvey, Illinois, where he published a local newspaper, The Harvey Citizien. While living in Harvey, Lake met his future wife, Jennie Stevens of Newberry, Michigan.

"Jennie", the gift

Jennie was the perfect woman for John Lake. She had a refreshing sense of humour, keen judgement and a strong faith in God, as well as being spiritually sensitive. They loved each other dearly and were married on 5 February 1893 in Millington, Illinois. God blessed the couple with unity of spirit and seven children. The most significant support Jennie gave her husband was her prayer and intercession. During the course of their marriage, it was common for either one or the other to be troubled in their spirit when their mate was in trouble. Lake greatly appreciated his wife's advice and help. After two wonderful years of marriage, their home was overshadowed by illness and suffering. The doctors discovered that Jennie had tuberculosis and a heart condition. Her heart would sometimes beat so irregularly that she would faint, and sometimes Lake would find her unconscious on the floor or in bed at home. To regulate the rhythm of her heartbeat, she had to take increasing doses of stimulants and eventually only nitro glycerine tablets helped. The medical treatment robbed her of so much strength that she was barely able to do any practical work. Finally, on the recommendation of the doctors, Lake and his young family moved back to Sault Sainte Marie in Michigan, where he worked as a real estate agent. Jennie's condition progressively worsened until, in 1898, the doctors told them that there was nothing more they could do for Jennie.

Now we're getting radical!

Now Lake was facing the crisis of his life. Where was the power of God? His whole family had been ravaged by illness. His brother had been an invalid due to internal haemorrhages that had lasted over 22 years. His 34-year-old sister had suffered from breast cancer. Another sister had died of a blood disorder. Now the person he loved most was dying. Lake had already experienced the healing power of God. As a young man, he suffered from rheumatism. When the pain became so severe that his leg became twisted, he decided to travel to Chicago to visit one of John Alexander Dowie's "healing houses". When he arrived there, an elderly man laid his hands on him. At that moment, the power of God came upon him and his leg was immediately straightened. The rest of Lake's sick family members were also healed in Dowie's house. After being healed himself, Lake brought his invalid brother to Dowie's healing house and he too was healed of his ailment. When they laid hands on him, his blood disease immediately disappeared and he was literally able to rise from his deathbed. Lake then took his sister, who had breast cancer, to Chicago. When they arrived, she expressed considerable doubt, but when she heard the authority with which the Word of God was preached, her faith grew - and she was healed. She was immediately completely pain-free and the cancer receded completely within a few days. The smaller metastases dissolved and God completely restored her disfigured breast.

Dying? "I will not tolerate that!"

Another of his sisters had remained seriously ill despite persistent prayers. Lake planned to take her to Dowie's Healing House as well, but before he had a chance to do so, he received a call from his mother telling him that his sister was dying. He had to hurry if he wanted to see her alive. When Lake arrived, she was already unconscious, without a pulse and the room was full of mourners. When the heartbroken Lake's gaze fell on his sister's baby lying in the cradle, he thought: "She must not die! I won't stand for it!" He later wrote about this overwhelming compassion:

John (oben links) mit den überlebenden Angehörigen der Familie Lake. Acht seiner sechzehn Geschwister waren an Krankheiten gestorben.

"I cannot describe in words to anyone the outcry in my heart and how much the hatred of death and sickness that the Spirit of God had stirred up in me burned within me. The very wrath of God seemed to have taken possession of my soul." Lake walked with long strides across the room, crying out in his heart for someone whose faith was great enough to help them. He could think of only one man who had that kind of faith - Dowie. So he wired him the following lines: "My sister has just died, but my spirit will not let her go. I believe God will heal her if you pray." Dowie replied: "Hold on to God. I'm praying. She will live." As Lake read these words, he declared a relentless, merciless, spiritual warfare against the power of death, rejecting death with total determination in Jesus' name. Not even an hour passed before his sister was alive and well again. Five days later, at Christmas, she was sitting at dinner with the whole family. But that had been then and now his beloved wife was suffering, her condition visibly worsening.

Exposing the devil

On 28 April 1898, when Jennie's life clock seemed to have almost run out, Lake was encouraged by a servant of God he knew well to surrender to God's will and accept his wife's death. These words weighed heavily and Lake stiffened in resistance. But death still seemed close at hand. In sheer desperation, Lake threw his Bible against the mantelpiece and when it fell to the floor, it was open to the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 10. As Lake went to pick it up, his eyes fell on verse 38: "Jesus of Nazareth, as God anointed him with the Holy Ghost and with power, who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him." These powerful words gripped his mind. "... WHO WERE OVERCOME BY THE DEVIL ..." This meant that God had not caused Jennie's or any other sickness. If Lake was a son of God through Jesus Christ, then God was with him as he had been with Jesus. Now he was firmly convinced that the devil had inflicted this illness on Jennie. It was the devil who wanted to rob him of the mother of his children. The devil was trying to destroy his life!

9.30 a.m.

Lake turned to Luke 13:16: "But this woman, a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan bound, behold, eighteen years, shall she not be loosed from this bond...?" Now he suddenly realised that not only was Satan the cause of all illness and suffering, but that Jesus Christ - through Lake - could heal and free all these suffering people! Jesus could conquer the power of death through Lake. He did not doubt for a second that Jesus had died so that his wife would be healed, just as Jesus had died for the forgiveness of her sins. Lake decided that nothing and no one could rob Jennie of this gift. With a boldness that could only come from the Holy Spirit, Lake made the decision to let God, not Satan, have the final say in the matter. He walked with firm steps into the bedroom and declared to the visible and invisible world that his wife would be healed at exactly 9.30am! He then contacted Dowie and told him what God was going to do at that time. When it became 9.30am, Lake knelt beside his beloved wife Jennie and prayed to the living God. As he did so, the power of God came upon Jennie and flowed through her body from head to toe. Any paralysis disappeared, her heartbeat returned to normal, her cough subsided, she was able to breathe regularly again and her temperature dropped to normal levels - all at once! The first thing Lake heard from his wife was a soft sigh from her lips. Then she shouted out loud: "Praise God, I'm cured!" Lake was completely surprised, because her voice hadn't been this strong for years. Jennie threw back the duvet, stood up - and was healed! The joy that came over her and John was indescribable and they worshipped God.

The flashes of Jesus

Soon Jennie's story was known throughout the country and many travelled great distances to visit the Lakes at home. The newspapers had aroused the public's curiosity and the Lakes were soon thrust into a much sought-after ministry. People were coming to their homes daily to see what miracle God had worked and to be prayed for. Many also sent their prayer requests in writing. One day, after Lake had prayed for a man with a feverish wound about 25 centimetres in size, he received a telegram saying: "Lake, something incredible has happened. An hour after you left, the imprint of your palm could be seen burned into the wound, which was about six millimetres deep." In his later sermons, Lake referred to this kind of power effect as lightning bolts of Jesus: "We are talking about the energy of heaven and the power of God! Yes, even of the soul of Jesus, from which lightning bolts shoot forth! The people who are struck by the lightning bolts of Jesus are healed! Sin dissolves and sickness flees when the power of God is at work!"

Lake also compared the anointing of the Holy Spirit to electricity. Just as man had discovered the laws of electricity, Lake had discovered the laws of the Spirit. As God's "lightning rod", he rose up in his divine calling to energise the ranks of the dark forces and strengthen the body of Christ.

Spiritual power is exercised

In 1901, Lake moved to Zion, Illinois, where he studied divine healing under Alexander Dowie. It wasn't long before he was preaching in the evenings and studying whenever he had time. He also worked full-time during the day as Dowie's building superintendent. However, when Dowie's financial difficulties became more and more apparent in 1904, Lake decided to distance himself from him and return to Chicago. While living in Zion, he had invested large sums of money in the properties, but the value of the properties had fallen so much that he was on the verge of financial ruin after Dowie's death in 1907. He therefore bought a seat in the Chicago Chamber of Commerce. In the years that followed, he was able to accumulate over $1300000 and acquire an additional $90000 worth of property. Some businessmen who had recognised his business acumen soon asked Lake to bring about a merger of the three largest national insurance companies for a fixed salary of 5000 dollars. He was now one of the leading management consultants and advised major businessmen. He also earned hundreds of dollars in commissions. By the standards of the turn of the century, Lake was making a fortune. But inside him,

the call of God grew louder and louder. For a time, he was able to balance his thriving professional career with his growth in God. He had learnt to live in the Spirit in a way that he described as follows: "I had come to a point where it was easy for me to detach myself from the daily routine so that my spirit could stay constantly connected to God while my hands and mind took care of the daily tasks at hand."

Some people think that if you receive the call to serve the Lord full-time, you have to give up your secular job immediately. But as Lake's life story proves, this is not the case. Lake learnt to fellowship with God in his spirit and so progressed in his life of faith until the right time came for his ministry. He did not rush ahead of God, nor did he jeopardise the happiness of his family. When the time came, he was able to sell everything because his faith had grown over the years he had been in business with God. Lake had learnt very early on in the preparation phase for his ministry that "being" precedes "doing". He had learnt to stick to heaven's timetable.

New Languages and the Divine Timetable

When Lake was still living in Zion, he attended a house group at the home of his friend Fred F. Bosworth. Tom Hezmalhalch was preaching, and when the meeting was over, he told Lake, "While I was preaching, Jesus told me we were going to preach together." At the time, Lake had laughed at Hezmalhalch's prediction, but soon after, he submitted to God's will.

It wasn't long before Lake began praying for the baptism in the Holy Spirit in 1906. He approached the Lord with this request for nine months and, after coming to the conclusion that the baptism in the Holy Spirit was "probably not for him", he finally gave up. One day he visited a sick woman with Tom Hezmalhalch, who was one of his close friends, to pray for her. As Lake sat beside her bed, he was overcome with such a longing for God that his whole body suddenly trembled. Hezmalhalch, unaware of what was happening, asked Lake to lay hands on the woman. As Lake did so, Hezmalhalch was thrown to the ground by a lightning bolt from God. "Praise the Lord, John!" he said as he picked himself up. "Jesus has baptised you with the Holy Spirit!"

Lake later wrote about this incident: "After the phenomenal event, my soul remained filled with its glory for a long time. I realised that a great variety of spiritual gifts were now present in my life. I spoke by the power of God in new tongues and God worked through me in new power. The healings had also taken on a far more powerful dimension." Lake often prayed in new languages and he was convinced that a lesser degree of fulfilment could not be called the baptism in the Holy Spirit: "Through praying in languages, my ministry was called into being," Lake said. "It's that very special communication with God ... [that] reveals to my soul the truth that I share with you day by day through my ministry."

To re-emphasise: It is very important to wait for God's appointed time. Our calling was determined by God before we were born. As we grow up, He invites us to familiarise ourselves with it. The fact that we are aware of our calling does not mean that it is already time to live out this calling on earth. The time set by God must have come before full-time ministry can begin. So don't be discouraged during the preparation phase and don't compare your calling with someone else's. Every calling has its own timetable. Each calling has its own timetable and its own realisation. Your faithfulness to the Word of God, combined with your diligent spiritual preparation, will determine when the time is right.

Africa is calling

After Lake was filled with the Holy Spirit, his desire to enter full-time ministry grew enormously. His superior gave him three months' special leave to preach. At the same time, he said that "after that quarter, he would realise what a lot of money a $50000 annual salary was, and that he would probably not feel much desire to sacrifice that salary for the realisation of his religious dreams". Lake thanked

his supervisor for all he had done for him and left. Three months later, he declared firmly: "I have finished with everything else in life forever. The only thing that matters to me now is preaching and teaching the gospel of Jesus Christ."

He never returned to his former profession. In 1907, John and Jennie sold their property and gave up their possessions and wealth. They took a giant step of faith and decided to become completely dependent on God. Now was the time to preach. While they were ministering in the northern part of Illinois, the Spirit of God said to Lake, "Go to Indianapolis, rent a large hall there and prepare a campaign for the winter. Then in the spring you will go to Africa." When he came home and broke the news to Jennie, she already knew, because the Lord had spoken to her too. Lake's interest in Africa had been awakened as a child when he had read the reports about Stanley and Livingstone. As a young man, he had then had several spiritual visions in which he saw himself more often in Africa than in America. Through the Holy Spirit, Lake was given an insight into the nature and population of a country he had never been to. Now this dream was coming true. God had said he would go to Africa in the spring. So Lake moved to Indianapolis with his family and joined his old friend Tom Hezmalhalch. They stayed there for six months and the two were a powerful team through whose ministry hundreds of people were filled with the Holy Spirit. One morning, Lake had the impression that he should start a fast. After spending six days in close fellowship with the Lord, the Lord showed him that Lake would be casting out demons from then on. Immediately afterwards, Lake was given a special gift to recognise and cast out evil spirits, and within a very short time Lake was working very precisely in this area.

Walk on the water

On 1 January 1908, Lake began praying for the finances needed for the trip to Africa. Tom supported him; they estimated around 2000 dollars for the trip. After praying for a while, Tom slapped his friend Lake on the shoulder and said, "Stop praying, John. Jesus has just told me that he will send us the 2000 dollars. The money will arrive in four days." Sure enough, exactly four days later, Tom came back from the post office and threw four $500 notes on the table: "John, here's the answer!" Tom cheered. "Jesus sent them to us. We're going to Africa!" As the Lord had announced, the group left for Africa in April 1908. The group consisted of Lake, Jennie and their seven children, Tom and three of his companions. One of Tom's companions had already lived in Africa for five years, he spoke Zulu and was therefore very useful to them as a translator. Once they had bought their tickets, they had no money left for the other expenses that would arise during the journey. Now God's former millionaire had to learn to rely completely on God. All Lake had left was $1.50. Because Lake was obedient, the Lord was able to provide miraculously for the team. The immigration laws of South Africa at that time stipulated that every family entering the country had to have at least 125 dollars with them. Without this amount, they were not even allowed to leave the ship. As the ship approached the harbour, Jennie looked at her husband, who still had no money, and asked him: "What do we do now?" Lake replied, "I'm going to get in line like everyone else. We've been obedient to God so far. What happens now is up to Him." As he stood in the waiting line, preparing to explain his situation, another passenger tapped him on the shoulder and pulled him aside. He asked Lake a few questions and then pressed some banknotes into his hand, 200 dollars to be exact. "I feel like I'm giving you this to support your ministry," the stranger explained. If you have heard from God, then go forward boldly and resolutely in faith. He will be with you and take care of you in every situation.

A home away from home

The Lake family had prayed fervently for a house when they arrived in Johannesburg. As missionaries of faith, they were not supported by any church organisation, nor did they expect a faith community to welcome them after their arrival. All they had was their faith in God. When they reached Johannesburg in May 1908, they noticed a petite woman walking excitedly around the harbour area,

obviously looking for someone. Eventually the woman, an American, hurriedly approached Tom and asked: "Are you a missionary team from America?" When Tom replied in the affirmative, she continued: "How many of you are there?" "Four," replied Tom. She shook her head and said: "No, you're not the right family. Have you seen another one?" Tom drew her attention to Lake. "How many members does your family have?" she repeated her question. "My wife, myself and our seven children," said Lake. The lady's face lit up and she couldn't hide her excitement as she declared, "You're the real family!" She explained that God had instructed her to wait for this ship, as there was an American missionary family on board consisting of two adults and seven children. She was to find a house for this family."

In the afternoon of the same day, the Lakes were able to move into a furnished house in Johannesburg. God had done exactly what they had asked Him to do. The American lady, Mrs C. L. Goodenough, remained a faithful friend throughout their ministry.

A spiritual whirlwind

Just a few days after Lake's arrival, the first doors opened for his ministry. A pastor from South Africa was travelling for a few weeks and asked Lake to take over his position during this time. Lake accepted the offer immediately. When he stood behind the pulpit for the first time on a Sunday, over 500 Zulus listened attentively. A great revival broke out among them and within weeks whole masses of people from Johannesburg and the surrounding regions were saved, healed and baptised in the Holy Spirit. Lake was amazed at this success and he later wrote: "From the first second you had the feeling that a spiritual whirlwind had broken loose."

The meetings often lasted until four in the morning. What mainly characterised these powerful events were the impressive answers to prayer. Although the prayer was said for someone who was in another part of Africa, the prayer was answered immediately. The news spread far and wide and hundreds travelled to Johannesburg to be prayed for. After the services, the locals followed the preachers home, where they eagerly asked them more questions about God. Often such a group would still be discussing the power of God when the sun had already risen again on the African horizon. The following day, you could see people everywhere with a Bible under their arm, talking about the power of God that had worked the night before. An extraordinary number of outstanding healings took place. Injured, sick and debilitated people, who had lined up on one side of the stage, left the building cheering loudly after being prayed for: "God has healed me!" The crowd inside went wild and screamed with excitement as the miracles of God played out right before their eyes.

John and Jennie: The team

When the Africans couldn't attend Lake's meetings, they simply went to "the preacher's" house. Sometimes it was so busy that Jennie didn't have time to prepare meals for her family. She would let people in through the front door, receive prayer and then escort them out through the back door to make room for more new arrivals. Jennie was not only John's partner in life, but also his partner in ministry.

Lake felt that his wife "had a sharper spiritual judgement" than he did. She often received a word of knowledge for those who could not receive healing because of personal problems or sins in their lives.

The Lakes kept their healing ministry very simple. When people arrived at John's office, he laid his hands on them. Those who were immediately well were allowed to leave. But those who were still sick or only partially healed were sent to another room. When Lake had done his part, he brought Jennie into the room, who revealed through the spirit to each individual what was preventing them from

receiving healing. Most of those who were confronted with the secrets they had kept hidden deep inside confessed their sins and asked God for forgiveness. Then John and Jennie prayed again and God healed all those who had repented.

Those who refused to ask for forgiveness, even after Mrs Lake had told them the truth to their faces, went home sick.

What kind of man was he?

Lake was a man of action. One day, after an inspired call to conversion, the entire audience ran to the front of the altar. Among them was a man who suffered an epileptic seizure right in front of the stage and fell to the ground. Without even a second's hesitation, Lake jumped down to him from the stage and cast out the demon in the name of Jesus. When the man was free, Lake calmly returned to the stage. During all these years, a mighty anointing of the Holy Spirit rested on Lake. It was not uncommon for people he shook hands with as they entered the hall before a service to fall to the ground under the power of God. Occasionally, they would collapse when they were only two metres away from him. Lake's great mercy was demonstrated by the fact that he never ignored a cry for help. He never turned his back on a sick person who approached him and he was known to pray for dying animals when asked. There were times when he desperately needed a rest, but people would seek him out and bring their loved ones and friends to him. Lake prayed day and night and he refused to turn even one person away. The team was in constant need of food and money. Since it was not customary at the time to make an offering, Lake never resorted to this measure. He often found bags filled with money on the stairs outside the front door, or baskets of food that someone had secretly left there. Probably one of Jennie's biggest challenges in Africa was matching her husband's stamina and speed on duty. It was John's job to get the food they needed for their large family and bring it home. However, if John met a widow on the road with hungry children waiting at home, it could easily happen that he gave everything he had bought to that woman. Besides, Jennie never knew if John wasn't bringing someone for dinner, and if he was, she had to "stretch" the food to feed a larger group. Food always seemed to be in short supply.

Teamwork

After holding his first services in the pastor's church building, Lake now moved them to halls that he rented. When even these rooms could no longer hold the crowds, the team organised house groups. Lake and Hezmalhalch were now a "preaching team". Each of them preached five or six times during a meeting and no one could tell exactly where one's sermon ended and the other's began. Through the Holy Spirit, they ministered in complete harmony. Lake established the Apostolic Tabernacle in Johannesburg and in less than a year he had planted 100 churches. Administering these churches, which were scattered throughout Africa, required Lake to travel more and more.

See you again, Jennie!

On 22 December 1908, Lake received the most shocking news he had ever received. While he was working in the Kalahari Desert, his beloved Jennie had died. When he arrived home twelve hours later, she had already gone to heaven. Most reports indicate that Jennie Lake's death was due to malnutrition and physical exhaustion. While John was travelling, crowds of sick people gathered on the lawn outside the house awaiting his return. While they waited there, Jennie shared her limited food with them. She had tried to make their stay as comfortable as possible until Lake returned. But in all her endeavours, she had been robbing her own health. Lake's service to others took up so much of his time that he didn't realise the state his own wife was in. One factor that is often overlooked in ministry is the fact that there will always be "needs" that cry out to be met. One ministry alone will never be able to meet every need, no matter how resounding or anointed it may be. That is why it is

invaluable in Christian ministry to go about it with common sense. Both the body and the family need care, and family cohesion should be at the heart of any ministry. Understandably, Lake was devastated when he returned home and learnt that his wife had died. What followed was a very dark time for him and the wound of this loss hurt him for many years to come. The next year, 1909, Lake returned to America to find support for his ministry in Africa and to recruit new workers. Once again, God supernaturally arranged for the entire amount of money to come in through a single donation. Lake received $3000 so that he and his staff could travel back.

The plague

When the team was back on African soil in January 1910, an epidemic was raging in some parts of the country, killing 25 per cent of the population in less than three months. The disease was so contagious that the government paid 1000 dollars to any nurse willing to care for the sick. Lake and his staff offered their help free of charge. Although Lake and one of his co-workers went into the houses, took out the dead and buried them, he never caught the disease. When the terrible epidemic reached its peak, Lake was consulted by a doctor who asked him: "What are you doing to protect yourself? You must have a secret!" Lake replied: "Brother, it's the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. I believe that no pathogen can take hold in my organism as long as I stay in contact with the living God, whose spirit flows through my soul and body, because this spirit destroys every pathogen." Lake then gave the doctor the idea of carrying out an experiment with him. He asked him to examine the foam from the lungs of a dead person who had fallen victim to the plague under a microscope. The doctor discovered vast quantities of living pathogens. Lake astonished everyone in the room when he asked the doctor to spread the deadly foam on his hand and then announced that all the pathogens would die. The doctor complied and found that all the germs on Lake's hand died immediately. Those who witnessed this experiment were amazed. Lake had said: "You can put them on my hand and I'll put my hand under the microscope. These pathogens will not survive, they will die instantly." This power constantly flowed through Lake's hands into the bodies of sick people and brought healing to countless people. The "lightning bolts" of God instantly eradicated all illness and suffering. When the Dutch queen, who had already had six miscarriages, asked Lake for prayer so that she could carry a child to term, he sent word to the queen that her prayer had been answered. In less than a year, after a normal pregnancy, the queen gave birth to her first daughter, the future Queen Juliana of Holland.

Ministry of the spirit

December 1910 Tom Hezmalhalch left Lake's service. Lake was going through a very difficult time. He had only recently lost his beloved wife and now his best friend and partner was leaving him. But he received new strength, knowing that he was fulfilling the will of God. His American friends, who supported him, comforted and encouraged him. He received many letters from everywhere, assuring him that the writers continued to place their trust in his ministry. From 1910 to 1912, Lake continued his healing ministry and prayed for the sick. Great miracles occurred that continue to impact Africa today. Lake founded two large churches: The Apostolic Faith Mission/Apostolic Tabernacle (not to be confused with the Apostolic Faith Church) and the Zion Christian Church. Lake and his church published a news letter that was regularly sent to thousands of people. However, before these letters were sent out, the church members laid their hands on them and prayed that the Spirit of God would work through these printed materials. They believed that God would anoint these newsletters in the same way as Paul's handkerchiefs. And indeed, thousands of letters were received from all over the world, in which the recipients reported how the Holy Spirit had come upon them when they had opened the envelope. One lady even wrote that she began to "tremble" so much when she held the message letter in her hand that she had difficulty sitting still in her chair. She was filled with the Holy Spirit on the spot and spoke in new tongues. Lake explained this phenomenon in simple terms: "The ministry of Christians is the ministry of the Spirit. " Lake knew how to lead his entire congregation into the

presence of the Lord. He taught and brought them to maturity by sharing with the believers from the overflow of his Spirit. Because of this, they were able to keep up with the speed at which he moved in the spiritual realm. In 1912, the congregation was asked to pray for the cousin of a man who was undergoing treatment in a mental hospital some 11000 kilometres away. While a burning spirit of prayer came over the whole congregation, Lake was seized by an intense awareness of God's presence. He had the impression that rays of light were emanating from the intercessors and falling directly on him. Suddenly he realised that he was travelling in the spirit at a speed that must have been close to the speed of light. He finally arrived at a place he had never been before, but something told him he was in Wales. He entered the room where the man's cousin was staying. She was strapped into a bed and kept moving her head back and forth. Lake laid his hands on her and exorcised the demon from her. A second later, he was back on his knees on the stage in Johannesburg. Three weeks after this incident, they received the news that this woman was completely free and healthy. When the psychiatrists realised that her condition had normalised "out of the blue", she was discharged immediately.

The anointed vagabond

John G. Lake now turned his back on Africa to return to America for good. Through his ministry he had equipped 1250 preachers, planted 625 churches and led 100000 people to salvation. The exact number of miracles that took place around the world during his ministry could never be determined. Lake achieved these results through his ministry within five years! Lake returned to America in 1912. The family spent the first year travelling and recharging their batteries. In 1913, John met Florence Switzer from Milwaukee, Wisconsin, whom he married that same year. In the years that followed, they became the parents of five children. Florence was an excellent stenographer and it is thanks to her that many of Lake's sermons were recorded and preserved for later generations. In the summer of 1914, Lake met up with his former railway financier and friend, Jim Hill. The two had become acquainted while Lake was working in Chicago. Hill was delighted to see Lake and offered him and his family free tickets to use his trains whenever and wherever they wanted to go.

The Healing Rooms in Spokane

Lake took advantage of his friend's generous offer and travelled across the country. His first destination was Spokane in Washington, where he made a stopover and set up "healing rooms" in an old office building. It is estimated that around 100000 people were healed in these rooms. The newspapers in Spokane constantly reported the numerous healing reports of the formerly ill. What happened there was so incredible that the Better Business Bureau (a kind of consumer protection centre) decided to investigate the authenticity of these healings. They contacted the managers who kept track of the healing rooms to arrange an appointment for an inspection. To satisfy the Better Business Bureau commissioners, Lake called together all the people whose reports had appeared in the press. All eighteen testified before the bureau employees that they had been healed by the power of the Lord. Lake then gave the investigators a list of the names of people in the city who had also been healed so that they could interview them as well. He also offered them a service the following Sunday in which 100 people would tell of their healing. He asked the office to form a team of doctors, lawyers, judges and pedagogues to make a joint judgement. On the Friday before the proposed Sunday service, Lake received a letter from the Better Business Bureau informing him that the investigation had been extremely positive and that the testimonial service was no longer necessary. They also gave him high praise for the service he was providing to their town. Two members of the committee even visited him privately and said, "You didn't even tell us the half of it." Among the witnesses interviewed was a woman who had had a total operation. A healing miracle had restored her ability to give birth, and she proudly showed those investigating Lake's ministry the baby she had delivered as a result of the miracle. Another woman told of the miraculous healing of her compound fracture of the kneecap. After

being prayed for, her kneecap moved back to its normal position in less than an hour without her feeling any pain. Another woman, who was terminally ill with cancer, recovered completely after being prayed for. Another was instantly healed of rheumatoid arthritis, her bent limbs reformed and was then completely normal. She had also been healed of a stomach ailment and her earlobe, which had been missing since birth, had grown back. And yet the healing of a little boy surpassed all others in the healing rooms of Spokane. It is reported that the boy's head was shaped like a boat, i.e. "upside down". The doctors explained that they could not do anything for him until he reached the age of twelve, and even then an operation would be very dangerous. After a prayer, the boy's skull bones softened, his head expanded and his skull grew back to normal size. His paralysis disappeared and he was able to speak like all other children his age.

How did Lake explain these incredible healings? He often quoted Sister Etter in such cases, because she had an immense spiritual influence on his life. "Every now and then you experience these holy flashes of heavenly fire in a person's life, as we know them from our Sister Etter; when someone is healed, it is because her consciousness and Christ have become one. She is completely united with God. I have seen how a woman desperately struggling with death was healed in 30 seconds when Sister Etter cast the demon out of her. The flame of God, the fire of his spirit, a ten-second connection with the almighty Christ at the throne of God - that is the secret."

John und Jennie Lake mit ihren Kindern vor ihrer Abreise nach Afrika, 1907.

Lake und einige Mitarbeiter.

Lake unterwegs mit der Botschaft.

Lake und Mitarbeiter der „Heilungsräume" in Spokane (Washington), 1915–1920.

Ein Junge, der in Lakes „Heilungsräumen" geheilt wurde.

The quest for Pentecost

According to statistics collected by the government, Spokane, Washington was the "healthiest city in the world" from 1915 to 1920 thanks to the service of John G. Lake. The mayor of Spokane publicly honoured him for his achievements. As an excellent businessman, Lake always made sure that his records corresponded to the facts. These stated that up to 200 people a day were healed in the healing rooms in Spokane and most of them were not members of the congregation. Lake also founded the Apostolic Church in Spokane, which attracted thousands from all over the world who wanted to be healed and take advantage of this ministry. He held services there six evenings during the week and twice on Sunday, and also made house calls on weekdays. In May 1920, Lake moved from Spokane to Portland, Oregon, where he travelled as an apostle and took over a pastorate for a time. He soon established another Apostolic Church and a healing ministry similar to the one in Spokane. While Lake was living in Portland, he had a vision in which an angel appeared to him. This angel opened the book of Acts in the Bible and pointed to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. He also drew Lake's attention to other spiritual manifestations and revelations in the Bible and said, "This is Pentecost as God has given it through the heart of Jesus. Strive for it. Fight for it. Teach people to pray for it! Because this experience, and only this experience, will satisfy the longing of the human heart, and only in this lies the power needed to overcome the powers of darkness." From that day on, Lake did everything in his power to carry out the word of the Lord even more diligently. For the next eleven years, he travelled across America, repeating his success again and again.

Lake's mistakes

In his later years, Lake enjoyed a wonderful balance between the supernatural and the natural. But this understanding had cost him an expensive lesson. The price was his family. The children from Lake's first marriage suffered greatly from his frequent absences. Even when he was in the same room with them, his mind was somewhere else because he was always thinking about the ministry and the Lord. His children felt very neglected. You have to remember that these children had witnessed their mother die due to malnutrition and overwork in Africa. As a result, each one became very tough and left home very early, usually at the age of fifteen or sixteen, to live in Canada. By the time they were adults, their lives were steeped in bitterness. Still, two of Lake's sons declared on their deathbeds, "I wish Dad was here to pray for me." Lake deeply regretted that he had not given his children enough attention. He later wrote in a letter that all the miracles that had been worked by his hands could not give him personal fulfilment or compensate for the loss of his family.

The redeeming factor

But Lake learnt from this experience and eventually became a good husband, an attentive father and a resounding servant of God. The children from his marriage to Florence had a different attitude towards him. They remembered him as a man who loved to laugh and enjoyed being with his friends. In the autumn of his life, Lake was no longer so spiritual that he was no good for life on earth. He no longer had his head in the clouds and people no longer fell silent when they came near him because he was talking to them lovingly. Lake had finally learnt to fully savour both the natural and the spiritual life. The atmosphere in his house was no longer strict and stiff. He loved to joke around with his family at dinner. His hearty laughter often resounded through all the corridors. And he became a lover of opera and orchestral music and listened to the radio every Sunday evening. Lake had developed a refreshing sense of humour. He enjoyed reading Will Roger's newspaper articles and was later considered a "great entertainer" himself. He liked to lighten the atmosphere around him with laughter.

The magnet of God

When his ministry had reached its peak, the worldly people were so attracted by the knowledge he had of God that they constantly gathered around him. His sense of justice allowed him to take the reigns in any situation. He hated the Christian songs in which people were sung about as "worms". When he heard such songs, he turned up his nose and twisted his mouth, calling them "primitive songs". In his opinion, they were a dishonour to the blood of Jesus. Lake's daughter described her father as someone "who had a strong awareness that he was a king and priest of God and who also expressed this dignity through his behaviour and appearance". He also always encouraged others to see things from this perspective. Lake constantly challenged his family to treat all believers as kings and priests. Lake was the greatest defender of supernatural manifestations of his time. He often spoke with contempt on educational, medical and scientific panels in which Christianity was portrayed as something weak. When he preached one day, the tide turned and people flocked from everywhere to the "school of the Spirit" where they learnt to cooperate with the power of God and become one. Lake was seriously concerned that the world was so impressed by merely mental powers. He told of an incident in India that he had witnessed with his own eyes. A man there had allowed himself to be buried alive for three days and had then risen from the grave healthy and well. Another man had propped his head and feet on a chair so that his body floated freely in the air. Then he had had a huge stone smashed into two pieces on his chest. He devalued such manifestations in public and explained: "They are only on a psychological level. But above that there is the spiritual level and the amazing miracle of the Holy Spirit of God; and if God took hold of my spirit for just ten minutes, he could do something ten thousand times greater than that." "Christianity is one hundred per cent supernatural," he often said. "The only language that has true authority is Christian." He possessed an indescribable talent for encouraging faith and filling the hearts of his listeners with revelatory knowledge. The servants who were taught by him soon established their own ministry, through which amazing healings took place. Lake commented, "If he [a Christian] does not have the spirit to minister at a really high level, then he has nothing to give. Other men have intelligence, but a Christian should be a bearer of the Spirit. There should be no misunderstanding in that regard."

To achieve supernatural results, Lake called on every believer to receive the power of Pentecost. As he did so once again, he uttered the following prophecy, "As my spirit searches the future and endeavours to reach the heart of men and discern the desire of God, I see that there is coming from heaven a new, mighty manifestation of the Holy Spirit and that this new manifestation will be full of goodness, full of love, tender and in the power of the Spirit; it will surpass anything your heart or mine has ever seen. The lightning bolt of God will strike the souls of men. The sons of God will face the sons of darkness and prevail."

Miracles as a legacy

By 1924, Lake was known throughout America as one of the leading healing evangelists. He had planted a total of 40 churches in the United States and Canada, in each of which so many people had been healed that his congregation nicknamed him "Dr Lake". In December, his ministry once again bore important fruit. Gordon Lindsay, the founder of Christ For the Nations in Dallas, Texas, was converted when he heard Lake preach in Portland. Lindsay attended his meetings nearly every night and considered Lake his mentor. When Lindsay later fell ill with fatal flesh poisoning, he was completely healed after he managed to visit Lake's home.

Lake returned to Spokane in 1931 at the age of 61. He was weak and exhausted and nearly blind. So he decided to have "a talk" with the Lord. He told him how embarrassing it would be if he went blind after over 100000 people in America had been healed through his ministry alone. After they finished their conversation, his sight was fully restored and remained that way for the rest of his life.

In the heavenly regions reign

Labour Day in 1935 was a hot, humid Sunday. The Lakes had attended a picnic after the service and John was very exhausted when they finally arrived back home. He lay down for a while to rest. Florence advised him to stay at home while she went to the evening service herself. When she returned later, she realised that Lake had suffered a stroke. For the next two weeks he was very unwell and unconscious most of the time. On 16 September 1935, John G. Lake went home to the Lord. He had reached the age of 65. During the funeral service, in which Lake's life was honoured, many words of praise were spoken about him. But the statement that best sums up all these eulogies came from one of the many Christians who had been converted through Lake's ministry in Spokane: "Dr Lake came to Spokane. He found us there trapped in sin. We were sick, we were spiritually poor, we were desperate, but he revealed such a Christ to us that knowing Him was beyond our dreams. We thought victory was on the opposite shore, but Dr Lake made us realise that victory was on our side." As we close this chapter, I want to encourage you to live in the knowledge of your righteousness in Christ. Righteousness is a lifestyle that leads to victory in every situation. If we - like Lake - would grasp the position we have been placed in through Christ, the praises of God would resound in every nation. And every demonic dominion would collapse in the face of this authority. John G. Lake has proven that this lifestyle is available to us if we seek it. So don't miss out on what God has given us through Jesus Christ. Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal your heavenly position to you, then take your place and change entire nations for the glory of God!